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HEADLINE: UC Berkeley official to be UM president; Fund-raiser, engineer replacing Kirwan at College Park campus; 'He's a fabulous match'; C. D. Mote Jr. pledges to usher university into nation's top tier

BYLINE: Timothy B. Wheeler, SUN STAFF

BODY:

With the enthusiasm of a cheerleader, C. D. "Dan" Mote Jr. visited the University of Maryland, College Park yesterday and pledged to lead the state's flagship campus to the national prominence that has eluded it the past decade.

Mote -- a prolific fund-raiser and renowned scholar at the University of California at Berkeley -- was chosen by the University System of Maryland's board of regents to become the 27th president of College Park.

He succeeds William E. Kirwan, who is leaving after 10 years as president to lead Ohio State University.

Mote's salary will be \$ 250,000, about \$ 30,000 more than Kirwan was paid.

"This is clearly an institution on the edge of booming," said Mote, 61, a UC Berkeley alumnus and faculty member for 31 years.

He has been vice chancellor in charge of fund raising and public relations for the past seven years. In that post, he has raised \$ 765 million in gifts for the 30,000-student campus, more than twice the \$ 350 million goal at College Park.

Accompanied by his wife, Patsy, Mote gamely donned welcoming gifts of a Maryland tie and sweat shirt at a sweltering afternoon news conference outside the president's office.

He was greeted by a standing ovation from a small audience of faculty, students and staff, as well as presidents of other UM campuses.

"Unbelievable," he responded. "This is a real wow."

Mote's selection ends a five-month search for a successor to Kirwan, who had endeared himself to students and faculty.

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The 18-member search committee culled the Berkeley vice chancellor and two other finalists from about 70 candidates, according to Susan C. Schwab, the panel's chairwoman and dean of the school of public affairs. The panel began with about 200 names.

'A fabulous match'

"He's just a fabulous match for this place at this time," said Donald N. Langenberg, chancellor of the University System of Maryland, which governs College Park and 12 other state-supported campuses.

Langenberg said it is rare to find an internationally renowned scholar such as Mote who also is a capable fund-raiser.

Langenberg's counterpart in California, Richard C. Atkinson, lamented Mote's decision to leave but said Maryland would benefit from Mote's unusually strong academic background.

"I'm a great fan of his," said Atkinson, president of the University of California System. Mote will bring to College Park an emphasis on academic quality and recruiting top faculty, and a warm, witty personality, he said.

Mote has spent almost his entire life at Berkeley and acknowledged in an interview that he would have liked to have been chosen chancellor of his longtime school when that job opened last year. But Mote indicated he didn't look back when Langenberg telephoned him Sunday to offer him the College Park job.

"I've done everything at Berkeley I'm going to do," Mote said. "I'm looking for an opportunity to use all these talents I've been developing all these years in a new way that might be useful and effective. So, gosh, this is like going to heaven."

'On the fast track'

UM officials, faculty and students were impressed by Mote's credentials. But they also made it clear they expect much of him.

"While my classmates and I consider a Maryland degree to be very valuable, we want it to be worth even more when we graduate," said Jonathan Busch, student government president.

Said Raymond G. LaPlaca, vice chairman of College Park's board of visitors, "We expect to enter the 21st century on the fast track to become one of the top 10 public universities in the nation."

Mote, whose alma mater is in that top tier of academic institutions, said later: "I understand what quality is. I know what it is to be great."

He said he would seek to build on the progress made under Kirwan and gave himself a three-year deadline to produce measurable results.

Kirwan also had vowed to raise College Park's stature as a research institution but found himself thwarted by money woes. State officials who had promised to increase public funding for the campus wound up slashing it instead when the economy soured in the early 1990s.

Only after Kirwan announced his resignation in January and lamented the lack of state support for the university did the school get its budget restored to the long-promised level. Some on campus yesterday said they worry that the increase may not last beyond the election in November.

'A very tough skin'

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"Higher education is a very tough political arena, and he's going to have to have a very tough skin," observed state Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, a Prince George's County Democrat and key supporter of the university.

Mote, who likewise saw California legislators reduce Berkeley's funding by 30 percent, said fluctuations in public support for higher education are somewhat unavoidable. But, he added, "I expect to have my face known in Annapolis."

While fund raising will be essential to building up College Park, Mote said, money alone won't buy academic greatness. And though his own background is in engineering, Mote, who paraphrased Cicero during the news conference, said a strong university needs vibrant arts and humanities, not just sciences.

"It's a truly humbling opportunity, and Patsy and I are thrilled to do this," he said.

C. D. Mote Jr.

Born: Feb. 5, 1937, age 61

Education: bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, University of California at Berkeley, 1959 master's in mechanical engineering, UC Berkeley, 1960 doctorate in engineering mechanics, UC Berkeley, 1963

* Career: assistant professor of mechanical engineering, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, 1964-1967

* professor of mechanical engineering, UC Berkeley, 1967-1991; vice chairman and chairman of the department

* vice chancellor of university relations, UC Berkeley, 1991-present president, UC Berkeley Foundation, 1991 to present

* in 1992 began a 7 1/2-year, \$ 1.1 billion fund-raising drive.

* author of 300 publications and holder of patents in the United States, Norway, Finland and Sweden.

Family: married to Patricia L. "Patsy" Mote; two children

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GRAPHIC: PHOTO, NANINE HARTZENBUSCH : SUN STAFF, No. 27: C. D. "Dan" Mote Jr. and his wife, Patsy, attend a news conference introducing the new president of the University of Maryland, College Park. He becomes the 27th president of the campus.

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